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The AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

AUGUST, 1947

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MOSTLY PERSONAL

By MARGARET A BARTLETT, Publisher



Margaret A. Bartlett

THIS is the month of vacations, of visiting, of much entertaining and outdoor living. Many subscription cards have been pulled and filed in a separate box under the notation "Hold till September." Many renewal checks are accompanied by notes saying "Too busy to read just now, but I don't want to miss a copy."

So, under these circumstances, I decided that you would all be very considerate and understanding if I cut the August issue to 24 pages and had an opportunity to catch up a bit on the greatly increased printing costs that have been in effect these last few months, threatening an increase in our subscription price.

I hated to cut down, for it meant pulling an unusually interesting article on gag writing by Negley Monett, and several helpful shorts, "Big Money in Little Experiences," "Facts Into Seasonal Features," "Cut it Down!" all of which are of special value to the writer who is not yet "big time." But they'll all appear in September, together with a carefully picked selection of other articles.

Soon after she was grown, Mary O'Hara (front cover) went to California from her native New York and there began to write for motion pictures. It was in this work, she feels, that she learned how to construct a dramatic story and how to paint vivid scenes. The millions who have read her Wyoming Trilogy, "My Friend Flicka," (Flicka was her favorite filly), "Thunderhead," and "Green Grass of Wyoming," and seen the stories on the screen, will agree that she learned thoroughly and well.

A writer from the age of eight, Miss O'Hara early established herself as a composer of songs and arrangements for the piano. "Green Grass of Wyoming" was first a poem, then a song, finally the novel.

She received her early literary training by listening to the sermons of her Episcopal clergyman father and by studying languages and music in Europe while traveling with her grandmother.

For the past fifteen years she has lived on a ranch in Wyoming, the wife of a Swedish American, Helge Sture-Vasa. At present she is traveling in Europe.

We are grateful to Mary K. Tennison for putting us in touch with Jean Provence ("Writing for the Community Theatre"). Browsing through her "Modern Writers," we came on the biography of Jean Provence—and reached for the Dictaphone. Here was the very man we had been looking for to write us an article for our Play Market issue. Author of a long list of plays and books of entertainment material, he began as every young playwright would like to begin—he sold the one-act play he wrote in a play-writing class at the University of Arizona to Walter H. Baker Co.

Mr. Provence has his M. A. in dramatic literature from the University of Arizona, and has studied drama at Louisiana State and Columbia. His home is in Phoenix, Arizona.

Helen M. Roberts ("Ibsen and I") is likewise a steady producer of plays — children's plays. Her first play, "The Little Shepherd Who Was Left Behind," written about ten years ago, sold to the Banner Play Bureau. Every year since she has sold from one to three Christmas plays for school, church, club, or community, to this house.

Aside from the chessman technique which she describes in her article, Mrs. Roberts (mother of four grown children) finds her greatest help in watching rehearsals of her plays at the Palo Alto Children's Theatre which for six consecutive years has produced one of her Christmas plays. "Here," she says, "I can add lines where more characters long for a part, speed up slow parts, change speeches that are stilted, observe children and adult reaction, and later revise before publication." She thinks nothing of traveling 20 to 50 miles to see one of her plays produced. . . . Last year she sold 13 plays.

Writers who delight in saying that they write what they want to write just as they want to write it, and the editors can take it or leave it, know only too well how many times the editors "leave it." I can see their chests swelling, however, when they start to read Scott Meredith's "Eye on the Ball." "There! Didn't I tell you," they'll say, "a fellow can disregard all the tastes and taboos of even *The Saturday Evening Post*, and get a story across. Meredith proves it. Now I . . ." But read on, Brother, read on. The *Post* did buy "Greek God with the Ivory Head" (it appeared in the June 14 issue as "The Corpse in the Mine-Shaft") but Alan Ritzer Anderson is taking no more such long chances. Mr. Meredith has handled a great many stories. He knows from experience the kind that place the easiest.

Until I checked back, I didn't realize it had been so long since we had had an article on poetry writing. That's not fair to our verse-writing subscribers. We'll do better from now on. In this issue Clement Wood, poet, critic, author, lecturer, tells about "Hatching and Incubating Poems." He has promised us several other articles. We have on file, too, an article by Dick Hayman. "Weighing Light Verse."

It would be our luck to have Addison Hallock ("Card Bards, Not You—Too", July, 1947) leave the Quality Art Company where we had placed him in "Mostly Personal," to become editor of Julius Pollock & Sons, 141 E. 25th St., New York 10, with the news reaching us just after we had gone to press! "No editor" presumably accounts for our failure to hear from Quality in answer to our questionnaire. Now we learn Mr. Hallock wants four- and eight-line Christmas verse only. Payment is 50 cents a line.

I'm afraid Janet Doran ("Don't Hoard," June, 1947) is going to have some explaining to do. Letters have been pouring in, gist of which is "Janet Doran refers to the son who hid his talent under a bushel and brought it to his father only to discover that although his brothers had improved theirs, his had shriveled. My Bible has a servant receiving the one talent—and it didn't shrivel, it was taken away." Oh, oh, Janet!

(Continued on Page 18)

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THIS IS A HORROR STORY...



It is the sad saga of Horace Hackenhammer, a writer who tried to run the whole shebang.

Horace was a nice young fellow who was fortunate enough to possess a smooth and interesting style, and the beginnings of a sense of plot and some intelligent ideas about characterization. All the ingredients for successful writing — and yet, oddly enough, he didn't get anywhere. The reasons? We'll come to them in a minute.

First of all, you see, Horace decided that he could be his own expert on the Works of Horace Hackenhammer. He evaluated his own stories — and sometimes, when he wasn't quite sure of a yarn, he asked the advice of friends, relatives, and interested fellow writers. He didn't know, regrettably, that not one writer in ten million is a competent judge of his own material, and that friends, relatives, and interested fellow-writers can no more help being prejudiced — in either direction — than a brand-new magnet can help picking up nails. And so into the fire went most of Horace's best stories, and into the mails went most of his duds . . .

Then, too, Horace became his own market expert. He lived a thousand miles away from New York City, the publishing center, and had no way of knowing anything about day-by-day market needs and changes, and editors' particular tastes and idiosyncrasies — but he became his own market expert. And so his stories went to the wrong markets, and changed markets, and overstocked-that-type-that-week markets . . . and limped home, growing more bedraggled and dated with each trip.

And thus one day Horace, convinced that his stuff would never go, broke down under the strain. The drawing above might well be a recent portrait.

It's too bad Horace never realized that there's an old invention known as the literary agent, whose function it is to catch writers' duds and get them repaired, if possible, and who is in daily contact with editors and publishers and gets salable material to the right market at the right time. Certainly is a pity.

But, good reader, don't you be a Horace Hackenhammer. We report within one week.



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THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

August, 1947

||| EYE ON THE BALL

. . . By SCOTT MEREDITH

THE tastes and taboos of *The Saturday Evening Post* are common knowledge to most writers.

They have read that the best length for a *Post* short story is five thousand words or less. The most favorable nods lately, as a matter of fact, have been given to scripts of forty-five hundred words downward.

Second, the *Post*, like most magazines today, does not writhe with excitement at the sight of a story dealing with veterans' readjustment problems. This subject has been treated so heavily and steadily since the opening days of the demobilization program that the public at large is sick to death of it, as are most veterans themselves—and *Post* buying habits underline this attitude. Most of the scripts of this type you see in current magazines are the ragged remnants of editors' inventories.

And third, the *Post* caters to a family audience. While editorial tastes at Independence Square are not delicate to the point of girlishness, they've still got to be careful of the kind of stuff they print. They don't, for example, care for scenes of excessive brutality.

Get these points straight, and don't forget them while I tell you about a short story called "Greek God with the Ivory Head," by Alan Ritner Anderson.

"Greek God burst into my office on a mailman's back one rainy Monday morning, and I read it while commuting home that evening. I don't usually become excited about stories, but this one was different.

I phoned Sid Sydney, chief reader at my agency, as soon as I reached my home, and he came over that evening and read the script and we talked about it well into the night. Promptly the next morning it was turned over to Peggy Dowst of the *Post*. She bought it like a shot.

But—"Greek God with the Ivory Head" is 8800 words long. Its lead character is a veteran with a serious readjustment problem; inability to support his new wife. The story contains several excessively brutal and starkly realistic scenes: One, for example, in which the hero, who has been wounded in the head and finds it difficult to think, suddenly comes upon a dead man lying in his bootleg mine, and—knowing the publicity surrounding his discovery will lead the authorities to the illegal mine—kicks the corpse again and again in an agony of indecision and unhappiness.

"Oh," you are probably thinking, "Alan Ritner Anderson (though you've never heard of him per-

sonally) is some big-name writer; he can get away with these things because of his reputation."

You're wrong. Anderson is an absolute unknown in the slicks, recently out of the Army. Before the war, he was an off-and-on seller to the pulps. Neither is he related to Peggy Dowst in any way, nor has he ever met her; and he is not the long-lost son of a member of the Board of Directors of the Curtis Publishing Company. The story was not purchased to fill a sudden hole in an impending issue, nor did it sell as the result of one of those fairy-tale, nonesuch deals where the agent tells the editor, "You want the story by Wilbur Bigname? All right—buy this one by Horace Beginner as a tie-in and you can have it."

The *Saturday Evening Post* bought "Greek God with the Ivory Head" (it appeared in the June 14 issue under the title "The Corpse in the Mine Shaft") because it was such a wonderful yarn Miss Dowst and her compatriots couldn't resist it, regardless of how offtrail it was. And there's a simple truth for you: Place a genuine nugget on an editor's manuscript pile and he'll break every rule in his book to publish it.

Most of you are familiar with the sort of material which makes up a typical issue of *The New Yorker*. There are a few light and frothy fiction pieces, a few serious literary fiction pieces, a few short fact articles generally concerned with the New York scene, and a smattering of departments. Yet do you remember what happened when John Hersey wrote his enormous and wonderfully vivid article about the atom-bombing of Hiroshima? The boys at *The New Yorker* were so impressed with this utterly atypical piece that they devoted an entire issue to it!

Now I have not given you these two examples to suggest that you emulate what Alan Ritner Anderson did. Instead, I am suggesting that you avoid the practice, as Anderson is now avoiding it in his process of becoming a steady slick seller.

The sale of an 8800 word short story of the type described to the *Post* may be compared in many ways to the man who does almost everything wrong at a golf course and nevertheless makes a hole in one. Any golf pro will tell you, as two of the basic rules of the game, to keep your eye on the ball and avoid wiggling your club as you swing . . . and yet, once every decade or so, a beginner strides onto the green, and while experienced players sweat and strain with

each stroke, playfully taps the ball with the edge of his walking-stick, wiggling his stick and looking into the air as he does so, and the ball streaks hundreds of yards into the cup.

There's nothing conscious about it, and the beginner will have one devil of a time if he tries to do it again. Yet somehow, in some way—deep in the heart of all that wrong doing—he has done something so very right that he has performed the miracle of a hole in one.

Heaven alone knows what he has done. Perhaps he flicked his wrist in a manner which put force and direction behind his stroke. Perhaps his stance was wonderfully right though his grip and sighting were not. Even watching golf pros have been unable to tell.

The secret of success in a case like Anderson's, fortunately, is easier to isolate and stain; the very good qualities which outshone the bad are easy to see. If you read Anderson's story in the June 14 *Post*, you'll note that the writing is brilliant and the plot eminently satisfactory as a creator of reader-emotion: even though it is the wrong type of story and the length is off. The rub lies in the fact that a flash of brilliance is never as satisfactory as a steady stream of light.

In a book of true sea stories, I read once that, aboard doctor-less ships where men suddenly had appendicitis attacks, fellow crew-members—employing little more than hope and a kind of wild intuition—had performed completely successful operations. This sort of intuitive brilliance is inspiring stuff—and yet, if you felt that tell-tale twinge in your side, would you prefer to be operated upon by one of these men or by a normal, usual, everyday medical doctor whose method was to follow the rules of the game?

The doctor follows the rules of his profession because he has learned—from his own observation and from the observation of thousands of doctors before him—that those rules bring about the best results. He knows that the hunt for the cause of a pain must be performed in a specific way, because experience has proven that that is the best way to find that cause; he knows that he must set about to cure a specific ailment in a specific way, because experience has shown that that is the best way to cure that ailment.

The rules of the writing game were not created senselessly, without point of reason. When an editor informs you that he's rejecting your script because the lead character does nothing to solve his own problem, and in a pulp story the lead character *should* actively solve his own problem, this isn't a bit of nonsense built upon one man's whim. It is an important rule of good commercial story-telling based on the proven psychological fact that a man who solves his own problems is far more admirable and satisfactory than a man who has someone else solve them for him: and a hero (particularly of the overdrawn pulp type) should be admirable and satisfactory. If an editor rejects your story, however well-written, because the central problem is weak, he knows what he's doing. He realizes that life is still unsettled and nerve-wracking for most people, and that, with diverting thoughts pressing on so many minds, a story must be strong through a powerful central problem to retain reader attention. And so on down the line.

The same thing, of course, applies to the rules of individual magazines, just as it applies to the rules of fiction or non-fiction writing in general. An editor insists on specific lengths because he has learned through reader-polls and letters and the like that his audience prefers those lengths: some grow bored if



"Another check from Horrible Stories, Mr. O'Ghoul."

the short story is too long, and others insist on novelettes because they grow tired of the quick read-and-finish tempo of short stories. Editors insist on the avoidance of certain topics because they've learned that these topics are distasteful to their readers. They insist on constant play on other topics because these are *liked* by readers. And all these rules should arouse only gratitude in you because they show you the direction into which to divert your talent.

You've got to remember that your story may be an artistic and wonderful thing when it is in the works, but the moment it leaves your typewriter it becomes a piece of merchandise. And as merchandise, it must be made to fit the tastes and needs of the consumer.

Many writers who insist they want to become professionals, and who say they really intend to write for a living, think nothing of writing the way they like no matter what the public wants. And yet they'd consider a haberdasher crazy if he sold only one-sleeved shirts because those were the kind he liked no matter how his customers felt about it.

If you can't abide the rules of a particular magazine, don't write for that magazine. If you can't abide the rules of a particular field, don't write for that field. That is why it is always best to write the kind of material you like to read: because with that type of material you can write the kind of story you like to write, and still follow the rules to make that story the best of that type.

And if there's no outlet at all for the kind of material you like to write, pound your typewriter as a hobby—but forget about it as a profession. You're a builder making glass houses for a community which desires steel and stone, and you'll starve.

In following the rules of the game, let me say in closing, there's no reason in the world to sacrifice the originality and freshness of your own particular talents. The rules are broad and wide, merely rigid enough to show you the directions in which to move. Beyond that, you're on your own.

All surgeons perform appendectomies in the same basic manner—but each doctor's skill with the knife is particular and individual and his own. You've got certain rules, but the skill of application is your own too. You need a strong problem and strong solution, that's all: make the problem and solution original and fresh, and not just the same as the one appearing in a current periodical.

Follow your own inclinations toward freshness and originality—and keep your eye on the ball at the same time. I'll see you in your favorite magazine!

HATCHING AND INCUBATING POEMS

. . . By CLEMENT WOOD

A FEW weeks after the atabomb fell on Hiroshima, a poet of the Deep South, who conducts a syndicated column of verse and prose, Olga Reed Pruitt, as she was driving along a country lane, saw a pumpkin glowing out of a cornfield toward the setting sun. She had learned the wisdom of letting what thrilled her word itself on her lips in verse. At once she whispered:

Punkin' shinin' in the sun—
It's fall in Mississippi!

Again wise, she reached for pencil and paper, that she would no more leave behind her than she would her eyes or her Democratic politics, and wrote down the couplet.

The lines came rippling out . . . *Leaves are fallin' . . . Hint of frost . . . Air is getting nippy*—and a second stanza,

'Taters roastin' in the stove,
Collards lookin' spry;
Stay, ol' possum, in yo' hole!
Houn' dog's passin' by.

She had sixteen lines of it, before she stopped to realize that she was actually writing it. Into her column "*Fall in Mississippi*" went. Every Mississippian liked it. People from as far off as St. Louis and Phoenix wrote for extra copies. She used it again, with increasing popularity, in 1945, 1946, 1947. She felt it was time for her brain-daughter to make a formal debut. A poetic friend pointed out that she could give it the structure of a pastoral etude by adding a central stanza rhymed like the first and last, and letting the second and fourth rhyme like the *possum* one. And why not open her eyes, he asked, to the three other seasons in Mississippi, making a suite of four etudes; and have the State itself use the four poems, on a royalty basis, to advertise the charms of the Southern State to tourists and other visitors? Given this impetus, the project developed like clockwork. You can hardly pass through Mississippi now without encountering these four fascinating verses—and adding your contribution to the poet's royalties.

Here the sight of one pumpkin in a field led to a sustaining royalty for life; made the poet the informal State laureate; gave the State a pastoral anthem. Another poet, wintering in Arizona, jotted down each thing that impressed him: the Hall of the Oldest Gods, in the Valley of the Giants, heart of the Wonderland of Rocks; the "little lakes that were not there," or mirages; the land comatose for lack of water; the saguaro cactus trees, haloed with their snow-cheeked blooms, like beheaded saints; the crown of thorns, the robe of thorns. Suddenly the idea of "The Crucified Land" came to this poet, for the first time to any man. This became the title of his Arizona Suite, which embodied all his impressions of the martyred desert Christ. Here the impressions came, and were promptly noted down; their totality gave the star-burst of imaginative understanding in the title. To present it all, a music-in-words structure as shapely as "The Grand Canyon Suite" was skilfully interwoven. For a climax, the

poet used the folk-idea that a cat's washing behind its ears is a sign of rain:

Bob-cat, wash behind your ears—
mountain lion, wash behind your ears!

Spit your rain, as you spit your lightning,
spit your floods of foaming thunder—
each dip is a pool, each valley a lake,
with water spilling over and under.
The fat cows bawl, and the plump calves bawl,
and cram and stuff over the Eden sod.
You have brought the infinite balm of rain,
and rain is grain and God!

Even a crucified land earns its resurrection. The poem starred the volume in which it appeared; and the poet added both to his reputation and his royalties.

The impression need not be region-wide or even State-wide. A poet saw a bulldozer ripping the forest Eden she loved into a city suburb. Swiftly her imagination leaped to the couplet:

Beauty is not blurred beneath this palimpsest:
she has only built, somewhere, a lovelier nest.

The three magnificent "A Nest for Beauty" sonnets grew out of this beginning:

for I shall find where she has chosen to dwell
high in the skye reaches of my soul.

This is the consolation of the quest:
my own mountainous heart will home her nest.
The heart lives on, then, when the flesh is dust,
as coral is brightest when its life has fled.

This fresh phrasing of the ancient hunger and thirst for immortality at once earned its deserved popularity.

A lone tree-girt woodland pool woke the couplet
at whose bared and printed brink
herds of centaurs come to drink.

The "poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling," peopled the leaf-rugged poolscape so. Before the poet had let it all come, all the soul-dreams of Hellenic mythology were at the brink beside him, all phrased with a technique as modern and lovely as tonight's moonrise:

Pan, or some more impish prankster,
screened by clouds of blossoming pinkster.

The only price the poet has to pay, to permit poems to hatch so, for his later skillful incubating, is to remain alerted and sensitive, at every moment, to the beauty, the thrill, thrust into the soul from without.

The sight of flaming autumn leaves dulling to brown awoke:

Gracefully the summer dies.
Lay your pennies on her eyes.

She was young and heaven-fair,
with cloud-ribbons in her hair,

eyes like still mountain-lakes,
roses in her glowing cheeks—

to the final processional, to unheard music as lovely as the "Execution March" in "Yeoman of the Guard":

Now her shroud is snowy white,
and she lies as still as night,

done with rapture and surprise,
Lay your pennies on her eyes.

A glimpse of wind rippling an unmowed lawn birthed the memorable "The Wind-Foxes," a picture that will forever recur when the grassheads sway:

I know that they slip from their hidden cover
to flash over the grass unseen—

foxes sired by the huffing wind,
sleek vixens as fleet of foot,
one in speed with the wind's rut,
insatiable, undisciplined.

Of the den,

—it is hidden eternally:
the spoor visible a moment, and then

gone, like a breath breathed on a glass.
Shod with the wind, hungry as rain,
they flash down the yielding gray-green lane,
and all you have left is the righting grass.

A dew pearly cartwheel spider-web evoked "Jewelled Snare," each pearl "a mirror for earth and tree and sky." The poet first noted, "Each pearl strains downward, pulled by the globe"; then, with clearing vision,

I

see that each seed pearl on the web
lifts the earth up toward *its* sky—

swings the earth on an unseen chain
stronger than all her gossamer;
swings the fiery ball of the sun,
swings the vastest furthest star.

This is precise science, even in the age of Einstein, as well as heart-yeasting poetry. The mere sound of "Train-whistles at Night" was translated by the poet into an enduring vision—one of the finest sustained figures in our language:

I love to hear trains low at night,
homing from some far pasture . . .

They moo louder through a blind fog,
or black hours drizzly with moisture,
that nothing can halt their mad stampede
from the misty distant pasture . . .

They snort away into silence, then,
in their glistening icy vesture,
lowing into the depot stall,
home from the distant pasture.

The observation can come from something merely read. The marvels reported by the Byrd Antarctic Expedition so impressed me, that their picturing of the region of the mythical Swain Island evoked "The Ballad of Jonathan Swain," a symphony of austral wonder:

Ghostly ships leered past him.
The moon grew old and pale.
The stars split and fell from the sky
like sleet and silver hail.

Then came the enduring mirage:

The water grew red as rubies.
The air fluttered with birds.
A green island lay hard abeam,
brighter than new words.

So it moved to the inevitable climax:

A man may flee from some things
to the ultimate land and sea;
but there is one thing no man escapes:
he cannot flee memory—

he cannot lose one ripple
on memory's living stream;
he can lose the earth and the sun and the stars—
he cannot escape his dream.

The impetus, the stimulus, the starting-point for these successive poems has been: a pumpkin in the autumn sunset; the rainless death of the desert; a bulldozer ripping a woodland into a suburb; a woodland pool; a scarlet sumac leaf turning brown; rippling grass; a dewed spiderweb; the sound of trains whistling at night; newspaper accounts of the South Polar region, broadcast by the press to everyone in the civilized world. Notice that three stem from our mechanized age, to twice that many from unrapped nature. All of these impressions have come, or could have come, to *you*, and a myriad more; for you have read of the desert, or widened your eyes to it in the pics. The poems did not come to *you*, because you were not sufficiently alerted and sensitive to what you sensed.

What has been written of nature and the machine is as true of people, and your reactions toward them: from mere strangers to those you know best. When the stimulus moves you, jot it down—preferably training yourself to let it come rhythmically, like the germ of the poetic corn-grain, the fertilized yolk of the Heliconian egg. Visit and revisit your jottings. Let the imagination round them and sphere them into all they mean and may mean. Write down your sketch for the poem. And then call on the allied art, music, to lend its aid in the final development.

Music usually has its prelude, to set the mood; its theme, which is returned to again and again, with altered and more radiant meaning each time; its deft use of all types of repetition, that inner core of poetry; its movements in different moods, light and tripping, sunny and melodious, martial and marching, shadowed and nightbound; to the starburst of glory at the end, when the heavens "open like a new-rent veil." All this treatment, remember, may be accorded a pumpkin, a bulldozer, a browning leaf, a train, a spiderweb, anything.

The poet may start and stop with a mere impression.

In spring
birds sing.

A musician might play a theme once, and stop, without repetition, development, shapeliness, climax. The poet would never be noticed, if this were all that came. Neither would the musician. As a poet, then, note carefully how your fellow-poets let the tiny stimulus beanstalk until it reaches "from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven." Moreover, as poet—since your craft deals with the music to be evoked from words, or sound shredded into speech—immerse yourself in music, the music you like, and even the music that you merely wonder at: to study how the effects are achieved, and how they succeed or fail, with you. Anything you observe, that moves you, is a possible germ for a poem, a match to your powder. The world without or within furnishes that much. Your own creative soul, schooled by the successes and failures of the poets and musicians from man's dawn to man's modern darkness, can do the rest—and will grow great, doing it.

WRITING FOR THE COMMUNITY THEATRE

... By JEAN PROVENCE



Jean Provence

THE GUN was not loaded! At least it was not loaded with regular cartridges. But when the wad from the blank hit the villain we had to rush the actor to the doctor. That was the end of our rehearsals. The Richmond Little Theatre had to start over again with a new play and a new cast.

In a Hamburger Heaven after the accident we discussed the danger of blanks. We decided what the theatre needed was a play with plenty of gunplay without actually discharging the gun. That led to a typewriter and a couple

of months later I bound up the manuscript of the "Scarlet Ghost." It was a masterpiece of gunwaving, but with not one whiff of gunsmoke.

I sent the play first to the Walter H. Baker Co. It came back in a few days with a nice letter from Theodore Johnson, the publisher. He said he was not in the market for a mystery play, and suggested I send it to his friend Harry Eldridge of the Eldridge Entertainment House.

The play traveled the few miles to Franklin, Ohio, and came back again. Mr. Eldridge wrote he liked the play and could use it. There was, however, one thing wrong; the cast was out of line for amateur production. There were ten men and three girls in the play. If the ratio were in reverse he would have been glad to send me a check. Could I change the cast so the boys and girls were even in number?

I wrote back I would see. My friends and I discussed the play and it was rewritten to have a cast of five men and five women. In making the change I learned a play for the community theatre is not typed together the same as a commercial play for Broadway. I learned enough for a start and got a check back from Mr. Eldridge.

Encouraged I wrote the publishers for their best sellers and settled down to learn something about the community theatre. Since then I have written and sold a lot of plays for Main Street. I have made mistakes, but fortunately I have always found the publishers cooperative in helping me adapt my material to their immediate needs.

The first problem any writer has in tackling the market for community plays is to learn the market itself. The community theatre in the United States is complex and has a wide variety of demands to make on the playwright.

Leslie H. Carter of the Banner Play Bureau warns, "The general trouble with the plays submitted to us is that they have not been written with any certain field in mind and are not what the publisher needs."

You cannot write a play for Broadway and then hope to sell it to a play publisher for the community theatre. That does not mean plays are easier or harder to write than the Broadway play. It simply indicates the producers and audiences of community plays want something different. They want a play that deals with

life about them and about themselves. It's their own mirror that pleases them most.

Roland Fernand, editor for the Dramatic Publishing Company, writes, "A Broadway play cannot get by on its reputation alone. There is really a small percentage of Broadway plays suitable to the community theatre. Hence we must depend on specially written plays for the bulk of our lists."

Like any target the community theatre is a series of concentric circles. It is a series of producing groups that have their own demands and yet blend into the next higher or lower level.

Harry Eldridge of the Eldridge Entertainment House points out the community theatre covers everything from a local theatre, with unlimited production and acting facilities, such as the Dallas Theatre, through the Farmers' Institutes and Granges which may put on an evening's entertainment in semi-dramatic form.

That means the potential author of a community play must evaluate what kind of community audience his show will eventually reach. Once that is determined the manuscript should be marketed to that portion of the play publishing industry that makes a particular appeal and sales effort to the communities for which the show is written.

The community theatre tends toward four distinct levels. Arbitrarily we can put at the bottom the thousands of producing groups in the small rural communities that buy the thirty-five cent non-royalty plays. They want plays written so that farm folks can understand them. If they are about farm problems so much the better.

At the cross roads are produced such plays as "Aaron Slick From Pumpkin Crick" and "Deacon Dubbs" by Walter Ben Hare. "Strawberry Kate" and "Cyclone Sally" by Eugene Hafer have had more productions than "Life with Father."

When I wrote "Grandpa's Twin Sister" I aimed it at the rural market. Grandpa Hatcher has a big farm and a lot of money. When he fails to get any peace



he dresses up like his long-lost twin sister. His granddaughter dresses up in whiskers like grandpa. She is tricked into making a will. You can imagine the trouble Grandpa gets into before he drags in the scarecrow to hold his place in bed. To make things funnier the Irish maid sends for a mail-order husband.

Corny? Sure, but it has sold thousands of copies. It combines several of the most popular themes in the rural play, mistaken identity, dressing up in somebody else's clothes, and a mail-order husband. The play is broad, full of eye jokes, and is about the audience. The check was as big as those mailed for seriously plotted and characterized high royalty plays. Here are the big volume sales.

Immediately above the rural community theatre is the small town playhouse. Here the directors select the same type of farce of the rural community only the subject matter is closer to their interests. Mystery plays, comedies about home life, and general interest plays are in demand.

•
Hundreds of copies of my play "Henry's Hired Aunt" are sold in the small towns. The motivation is rooted in mistaken identity. It has many of the features of "Grandpa's Twin Sister" but it is written in a slightly more sophisticated vein. There is less slapstick and more comedy.

Henry is suffering from amnesia. He falls in love with a girl whose aunt insists she marry a man with a family tree. Henry invents a family tree and hires an actress to pose as his aunt. His past catches up with Henry and there is the dickens to pay. In the last act I developed a lot of comedy by having Henry switch from one mind to another each time he was conked on the head. The heroine finally produced a helmet to keep him in the frame of mind to marry her.

Small towns enjoy mystery plays and do such plays as "Hobgoblin House" by Jay Tobias and "Tiger House" by Robert St. Clair. Walter Richardson's "Two Days to Marry" and Charles George's "Mama's Baby Boy" are popular in this field. A screwy family play "The Daffy Dills" by Jay Tobias sold 10,000 copies in the first year of publication.

The most popular community theatre in the United States is to be found in the average-sized cross section town of ten or twenty thousand up to the large cities. The communities are large enough to have adequate production facilities and a large group of actors to cast from.

Katherine Kavanaugh wrote the almost perfect play for the Average American theatre when she typed out "Every Saturday Night." It was produced by Francis Josef Hickson at the Gateway Players Club in Hollywood and was made into the movie that sent the Jones Family across the silver screens of the world.

This average American theatre has developed a play that is distinctly its own. It is the adolescent play about high school kids and home life. Here the community theatre is at its best. The plays are of high quality and reveal genuine characterization and understanding of the high school youngster.

When the publisher says he wants a better play or states the plays he is publishing are improving he is referring to the community play of the American Scene. This is a tough field to write in and demands as much skill from the playwright as Broadway.

The New York theatre has been influenced by this type of play. "What a Life," "Junior Miss," "Janie," and "Dear Ruth" are strictly community plays that found their way to Broadway. They are New York's versions of Main Street.

One of the best sellers of the adolescent plays is "Footloose" by Charles Quimby Burdette. "Spring Fever" by Glenn Hughes and "Don't Take My Penny" by Ann Coulter Martens are good plays to study in the Average American theatre. "June Mad" by Florence Ryerson and Collins Clements has made a fortune for its authors.

My two most successful plays of adolescent and home life are "Ignorance Is Bliss" and "Growing Up." "Growing Up" was tried out at the Gateway Players Club.

In "Growing Up" the ten year old community headache, Penny, fights with the son of Pop's boss and he loses his job. The kids patch up their fight and charge a basket of groceries to the boss. Pop lands in jail after a fight with the former employer, but the solitude of the cell gives Pop a chance to finish his invention. When the curtain goes down Pop and his boss have changed places. Pop runs the factory.

"Growing Up" is not a hokum play and there are no stock laughs in it. So far as I could make it all the comedy comes out of the conflict of character. I had a definite outline but somehow I never was able to follow it. The characters kept wanting to write the play themselves.

Early in the third act the son of the boss shows up with the marriage license of their older brother and sister who are eloping. From then on it was the kids' play, not mine. They did the writing. I must have been in a trance and took dictation from the spirits.

At the top is a limited group of producing groups in the large high schools and the well established Little Theatres than can pay fifty to a hundred dollars a performance for a play. Sometimes I am not sure if this is the top or the bottom level of the community theatre. One thing certain, it follows the Broadway line and buys the fewest plays by authors writing for the community theatre.

•
The large high schools have classes in speech which are devoted to play production. The Little Theatres are set up in imitation of the professional theatre. Both are interested in acting and what the actor gets out of the play rather than making money. It nourishes their ego to appear in a play that had a run on Broadway. Nothing is too far over their heads for them to tackle. There is always the solid earth under the basement to catch them. But the funny thing about it, sometimes they actually catch that star and nail it on their dressing room door.

This does not mean all dramatic groups in the large high schools and the Little Theatres produce only Broadway plays. They do many of the Average American plays as well as "You Can't Take It With You" and "The Man Who Came to Dinner." A Little Theatre in Denver actually did "Grandpa's Twin Sister" and had a lot of fun doing it.

The fifty dollar royalty theatre holds great promise for the writer of community plays, but so far the checks are still somewhere in the upper regions of the Golden River. Lee Owen Snook writes, "We are willing to consider plays for the older groups; but the tendency of Little Theatres to use only 'name' plays is discouraging to an author who does not have a Broadway boost. For that reason we shy at plays which are not in the high school or church field."

This field is not entirely closed to the community theatre playwright. Some of the colleges such as the University of Texas and the University of Oklahoma

(Continued on Page 20)

IBSEN AND I

... By HELEN M. ROBERTS



Helen M. Roberts

YEARS ago when I first began to write plays, someone told me that Ibsen spent hours at a time moving chessmen over a board in front of him—not playing a solitary game of chess, but moving characters in the great drama as yet within his mind.

Some people can see their created characters in physical detail, the complete room through which they move, and its relationship to the rest of the house, as well as every character's movement through-

out the scene. Other less fortunate writers may have the same visualization difficulty that I possess. Still others may have only partial visualization for the fairly long period required in a scene or act.

For the last two groups I would recommend Ibsen's device. Possibly the great dramatist worked his chessmen before he wrote a word, but for me it is a sort of proving-ground, a dress-performance with only myself as audience.

Because of this visualization difficulty, I write down every detail of the characters during the time they are being conceived in my mind. Physical details such as clothes and mannerisms, as well as character traits, voice, family relationship, past history, all are noted as guides whenever they occur to me. The entire plot is worked out, scene by scene. A rough sketch of the set is made.

The dress-rehearsal with the chessmen is probably much more detailed than Ibsen found necessary. To make the play more convincing to its author-audience, and also to help make it more playable by an amateur cast whose director is frequently inexperienced, I make use of an extremely simple and variable set.

A shallow 2" cardboard box about 10"x14" is suitable. The entrances and windows are not cut in the sides, but are movable arches that may be clipped into any position to suit any stage requirements. The furniture may be made of cardboard, or an entire set of small doll furniture may be purchased reasonably and used over and over. This furniture is arranged like the preliminary rough sketch of the set, but changes are frequently necessary to secure a pleasing and harmonious result.

Then come the chessmen. For simplicity I use the white men for those characters favorable to the hero or heroine, and black men for those antagonistic. Similarly in choosing individual chessmen, a pawn might represent a child or an unimportant character while the king, queen, or knight would have an opportunity to play appropriate parts. When there is a large cast, I sometimes fasten the names to the players with Scotch tape.

It is easier to arrange a satisfactory set when a working model like this is used. It can be as elaborate as desired. There is no doubt concerning the position of every character on the stage. When one character has left by a certain exit, he remains outside that exit until his re-entrance. Directors of amateur groups find frequently that a script only too often calls for lines by a character who has not yet entered, or that a character having entered remains as dead timber

after his initial speech. Worse still! Imagine a melodrama in which the villain is killed early in the scene, and no stage arrangement made for his disposal throughout the play.

After a play is completed in its rough draft, the performance with the chessmen on the stage is a sort of triumph as well as a necessary lesson to the writer, working with the script, reading aloud the play, and entering into the spirit of the characters' dialogue, movements, and attitudes, as a combination author, director, actor. Frequently speeches may seem too long, depending on the position or activity of the other actors. The entrances may appear ill-timed, or possibly insufficient time has elapsed since an exit for a certain character to have accomplished his purpose.

By placing the chessmen outside the exit they used, there will be no confusion as to which entrance they should use next. It may save searching through pages of script to find the missing exit. Even a writer with perfect visualization might make an error in entrances, an error which might be entirely overlooked until time came for the play's production.

All these stage corrections should be rewritten into the script at this reading. Then the play is ready for uninterrupted performances with still greater attention to the sound, the timing, the sharpening of the speeches, and the reaction of one character toward another.

A final "First Nighter" chessmen production will smooth out still more rough spots. Whenever possible a play should be given a group-reading, with the players walking through their lines. Better still, of course, is a trial performance. But where no opportunity is available for further testing before publication, the director, the players, and the audience will all be thankful for the chessmen's contribution to even the most unpretentious play, and the playwright will have the satisfaction of knowing his play is at least thoroughly playable.



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PLAY MARKETS

Art Craft Play Co., Drawer 1830, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. (Average 10 plays yearly.) One or three-act having one interior setting. Prefer few more men than women in cast. Plays must be suitable for high school production. Use farce or comedy in three-act plays—farce, comedy, or drama in one-act ones. Payment is made on purchase, depending on the play. "We make a point of giving all material an immediate reading and reply," states J. Vincent Heuer, editor.

Baker Company (Walter H.), 178 Tremont St., Boston, Mass. (Average 100 plays yearly.) Publishes all kinds of plays. Buys outright; infrequently on royalty basis. Increased demand for plays with all-women casts. Present call for post-war material having to do with world peace. Plays in two to three weeks. Theodore Johnson, editor. (This firm was established in 1845 and has one of the largest catalogs in the community theatre. Mr. Johnson is always willing to read any manuscript material provided it is slanted toward the amateur market. . . . Providence.)

Banner Plays Co., 519 Main St., Cincinnati 2. (Yearly number varies.) Buys entertainment material other than plays—skits, jokes, etc. One-act and three-act plays, all types, for mixed or all-women cast. Market is schools and churches. Buys outright or on royalty basis.

Banner Play Bureau, Inc., 449 Powell St., San Francisco 2. Wants plays of the type used mostly by high schools and small dramatic groups. Leslie H. Carter, president, himself is a writer of entertainment material and does considerable editing. The author will gain time by writing Mr. Carter about his play before submitting it. If possible the play should have had a performance before submission. . . . Providence.

Beckley Cardy Co., 1632 Indiana Ave., Chicago, is no longer in the market for plays.

Bugbee Company (The Willis N.), 428 S. Warren St., Syracuse N. Y. Willis N. Bugbee, president, is in need of a real good mystery drama with a mingling of good comedy. This is a general publishing house for the community theatre, slanting for the average producing group. . . . Providence.

Dramatic Publishing Co. (The), 1706 S. Prairie Ave., Chicago 16. (40-50 yearly.) Buys some reading, skits, holiday handbooks, as well as one-act and full-length plays, with one set shows preferred; also plays for all women and girls. Biggest single market is the high school. Reports in two to four weeks. Can use all types, although comedies and mysteries are popular. Payment is upon acceptance—outright or royalty basis. (The high school is this company's biggest market and plays of interest to young people are in demand. Recently some top-notch Broadway plays have been added but the community play remains the biggest seller. Roland Fernand, editor, will work with an author and help with the development of the play as he feels this tends to bring forth a much better script. . . . Providence.)

Dramatics Magazine, College Hill Sta., Cincinnati, Ohio. Is discontinuing the publication of one-act plays effective with October, 1947, issue. No plays will be accepted till further notice. Ernest Bavely is editor.

Eldridge Entertainment House, Franklin, Ohio. H. C. Eldridge, Jr., editor. "The type material used depends on the year's publishing schedule, but always includes three-act and one-act plays for schools, churches, women's and rural groups, etc., stunts, novelties, etc. Every year, we also have included special day plays for program books of readings, recitations, drills, novelties, etc. These special day items cover a wide range from Hallowe'en, Thanksgiving and Christmas, to Mother's Day, Easter, Graduation, etc. We are also interested in operettas for both high and grade school, minstrel material, etc. Our schedule usually includes entertainment material such as banquet books, stunt books, game books, panto-

mimes, speakers' helps, etc. Manuscripts should be typed on one side of sheet only, double-spaced and in the case of dramatized items, should be prepared in that form. Directions for staging, costuming, and action should be included, as well as dialog. Care should be taken to avoid stilted dialog and trite plots. Plays should include plenty of action, whether farce, comedy or comedy-drama in type. We prepare our publishing schedule in late fall for the succeeding year, so prefer to have manuscripts submitted between December and early Spring. Good mss. will however, be considered at any time during the year. We assume no responsibility for submitted mss., but give them all reasonable care. There is no reading charge. All short items and some longer material is purchased outright, although we do occasionally write Royalty contracts for full evening plays and operettas. Payment made on acceptance. (This house is one of the leaders in the special field of rural entertainment. Harry Eldridge is most helpful in slanting a play towards his specific needs. If he can use your play at all he will tell you how to rewrite it for a check. . . . Providence.)

Gillum Book Co., 400-408 Woodland Ave., Kansas City 6, Mo. (About 50 plays yearly.) Publishes all kinds of home economics material, buying outright at an average of \$25 for all plays accepted, in one or two scenes, 1000-5000 words, or running 20-30 minutes. Present demand is for nutrition plays, health plays, first aid, renovation of garments, fashion shows, etiquette plays, etc. Publisher judges submitted plays' theatrical possibilities, does not require testing before submission. Accepts or returns within one week after receipt. Mrs. G. N. Gillum, editor.

French, Samuel, 25 W. 45th St., New York. (This is one of the largest publishers of plays. At one time, it had the market sewed up on Broadway plays. The firm gets hundreds of manuscripts and requires a reading fee for submission. Before sending a manuscript write and describe your play. . . . Providence.)

Greenberg: Publisher, 201 E. 57th St., New York. Does not buy any plays regularly.

Hardin (Ivan Bloom) Co., 3806 Grove Ave., Des Moines, Ia. Readings 8-10 minutes; mainly one and three-act plays for schools and community groups, non-professional, avoiding sophistication, profanity, difficult staging, anything which would bar production where facilities are meagre, and anything in character which would make it objectionable to school and religious leaders in small communities. Buys outright at rates depending on length of play, on publisher's existing stock of that particular type of play, current popularity of such a type, and so forth. Also pays on royalty basis, varying terms, but generally 50 per cent of royalties collected on productions. Reports usually within 2 or 3 weeks.

(Continued on Page 16)

FIRST CEREAL RIGHTS

By JAMES A. CRAWFORD

Time is a sieve of finest mesh.

The grains of truth run through;
But we don't find the good whole wheat
That Grandad used to chew.

Perhaps the pale and mushy stuff

We grind out days and nights
Should have more grits, more husk, more germ
To sell first serial rights.

LITERARY MARKET TIPS

Golfer and Sportsman, 821 Masonic Bldg., Minneapolis 2, edited by C. E. Freeman, pays 1 cent a word on publication for human interest, informative articles of wide appeal, 1500 to 2000 words in length, and short stories of real literary quality, 2000 words. Some 4, 8, and 12-line verses, both serious and humorous, are used, as well as fact items of 300 words. All material must be of out-of-door, sport, or general interest nature, but must contain something of interest for every member of the family. Payment for verse is 40 cents a line. Margaret Bushnell is associate editor.

Horticulture, 300 Massachusetts Ave., Boston, Mass., published 20 times a year, uses short gardening articles, 250, 750, 1000 words, on gardening only. They must be actual experiences or else scientifically accurate. Gardening photos are also used. Payment is made on publication at 1 to 2 cents a word, \$2 to \$6 for photos. Supplementary rights are released to the author. Editor is William H. Clark.

The Buick Magazine, 818 W. Hancock Ave., Detroit, Mich., pays according to value, on acceptance, for articles covering places and events of interest to tourists, 500 to 600 words, illustrated with pictures. A. J. Cutting, editor, says: "We like short articles on places of historic or scenic interest; colorful ceremonies or festivals of more than local interest; people who are doing interesting things—if receptive to visiting tourists. We cannot use cartoons, poetry, quizzes, fillers of the oddity type, first-person accounts of vacations or tours." Fillers used cover interesting places or events, 200 to 300 words and one picture. Supplementary rights are released to the author.

Aviation Week, McGraw-Hill Bldg., 330 W. 42nd St., New York, according to a late report, is not in the market for any material. All the writing is done by the publication's large staff. Special articles are requested of specific individuals in the industry.

Kelly Janes, Box 506, Oakdale, Calif., was not able to put over *The Cypriot*, the little monthly for which he had great hopes. So check it off as suspended.

National Bottlers Gazette, 80 Broad St., New York 4, has increased its rate from \$7.50 a page to \$10 a page, plus \$3 to \$5 for photos and art. From now on, this publication will work only with credited representatives. J. E. Stevens, staff editor, informs

that application forms have been mailed to several hundred freelance writers, who may wish to apply for territorial assignments. Mr. Stevens will be interested in hearing from writers not on the list. All accredited correspondents will receive the "NBG Correspondence Manual," containing complete comprehensive information on the type of material wanted, how it should be prepared, types of material not wanted. They also will receive credentials identifying them as exclusive NBG correspondents in the territory covered.

Editorial offices of Fawcett Comic Magazines have moved from 1501 Broadway to the Fawcett Building, 67 West 44th St., New York 18. These include: *Captain Marvel Adventures*, *Don Winslow of the Navy*, *Captain Midnight*, *Ozzie and Babs*, and *Wow*; *Funny Animals*, *Hoppy*, *the Marvel Bunny*, *George Pal's Puppets* and *Mary Marvel*; *Hopalong Cassidy*, *Master Comics*, *Whiz Comics*, and *The Jungle Girl*.

The Modern Psychologist, which recently moved its offices from Noel, Mo. to Springfield, Mo., writes: "We are far behind on reading manuscripts. However, our rates, as promised, will be increased in another 60 days. Manuscripts not accompanied by stamped reply envelope will go in the waste basket. Payment on acceptance. Next issue will be larger, have a much wider market, and those who have done a good job so far at low rates will be remembered. Better inquire regarding subject, and length before submitting."

Hearth and Home, Skelgas Div. Skelly Oil Co., P. O. Box 436, Kansas City 10, Mo., issued bi-monthly, uses articles on homemaking, food preparation, household aids, care of the home and family, hobbies, family, etc., 500 to 1500 words, paying 2 cents a word, or \$15 for single page with photographs; \$25 for double page with photographs. Material should be of interest to rural and suburban families. All material becomes the property of Skelgas. Contributions should be addressed to Viola H. Ward, editor.

Teens is the new name for *Keen-Teens*, 11 Park Pl., New York 7, edited by Raymond C. Krank for girls in the first and second years of high school. It is currently overstocked. When it is in the market, however, it uses articles, 800 to 1000 words in length, and short stories, 1800 to 2500 words, paying 1 to 1½ cents a word on acceptance. Supplementary rights are generally released to the author.

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The Texaco Star, 136 E. 42nd St., New York 17, quarterly house organ edited by Wilfred B. Talman, pays \$10 for gag cartoons of a specialized nature used in two other magazines, *The Texaco Dealer* and *Texaco Topics*, but is usually well-stocked on these. Cartoonists should submit roughs only. Most of the material is staff-written or written within the company. Mr. Talman says: "We should be glad to consider occasional short-short fiction with an oil field or refinery locale, a cowboy or Western legend with some petroleum industry background if written in a light and fresh vein. Since our requirements are specialized, we prefer that writers query us before submitting completed manuscripts. Technical accuracy and good quality writing are imperative. Payment is made on acceptance at 2 cents a word. Supplementary rights released on request."

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PLAY MARKETS

(Continued from Page 12)

but sometimes during cataloging or busiest order season, 5 to 6 weeks. Testing before submission not required. Ivan B. Boyd, editor.

Little Brown & Co., 31 Beacon St., Boston, Mass. Rarely publishes single plays, usually not interested unless the play has been successfully and professionally produced.

Northwestern Press, 2200 Park Ave., Minneapolis, Minn. (60-75 yearly.) One-act and full-length plays suitable for high schools, colleges, churches, little theatres, and amateur groups. Comedies preferred. Present need, strong dramatic one-act plays. Also, publishes skits and various types of entertainment. Suggest that authors write for catalog. Buys outright at rates depending upon estimated sales value of the material; also, on royalty basis. Testing not necessary before submission, but an advantage to the author. Reports in approximately two weeks. L. M. Brings, editor. (This house is expanding and has recently bought the T. S. Denison Co., of Chicago. The Northwestern catalog contains plays for high school and community theatres alike. The Denison catalog has been slanted more to the rural theatre and has the longest list of minstrel material in the business. Mr. Brings buys the plays for both catalogs. He wants plays with farce elements dealing with adolescent themes. It would pay to write and send him an outline of your play. . . . Provence.)

Penn Play Co., 604 Locust St., Philadelphia. Publishes one and three-act plays, in one simple set, suitable for production by young people's groups, schools, churches, and little theatres, buying outright according to arrangements made with author. At present requires cast of most or all women. Does not require testing before submission. Reports within three weeks. Teresa E. Real, editor.

Plays, The Drama Magazine for Young People, 8 Arlington St., Boston 16. (90-100 yearly.) One-act only holiday, historical, comedies, fantasies, etc., suitable for production by school children. Magazine is divided into three sections according to age level—Junior and Senior High, Intermediate, and Primary. \$10-\$25, on acceptance.

Random House, Inc., 457 Madison Ave., New York. Plays of every variety which have achieved metropolitan production, on royalty basis on terms in accordance with standards established by the Authors League of America. Requires that plays have had testing before submission. Reports within two or three weeks. Sax Commins, editor.

Row, Peterson & Co., 1911 Ridge Ave., Evanston, Ill. (15-20 plays yearly.) One-act and three-act plays for high schools, colleges, churches—the general non-professional field. Best guide, is to judge audience reaction in such circumstances—reaction that the playwright has observed. Buys outright, paying upon acceptance as to suitability of a play for any of these groups, an amount in line with publisher's estimate of play's worth for the specific market, also on royalty basis, at rates which vary slightly as the matter is taken up with the playwright in each case. Steady demand for plays with preponderance of female characters, especially in full-length plays. "We believe war plays are liabilities at this time. Testing before submission not required, as publisher does testing if plays are bought, but tested manuscripts are preferred as they are usually better written. Reports usually within two weeks, often sooner. Lee Owen Snook, editor. Has a thriving department of plays for children, and is in the market for plays for the kindergarten on up through the grades. Plays that have been produced by the author are preferred, since much stress is put on testing. Operettas, skits, and practically all forms of entertainment for little folks. This material is bought outright or on a percentage of book sales.

Standard Publishing Co., 20 E. Central Parkway, Cincinnati 10. (10-12 plays yearly.) Entertainment material; religious plays—Christmas, Easter, and missionary plays. Outright purchase

at rate depending upon length and quality. Prefers testing before submission. Dorothy Fay Foster.

Pasadena Playhouse, 39 S. El Monino Ave., Pasadena 1, Calif., tries out original plays of its Laboratory Theatre which seats about 50 to 60 people. No royalties are paid for plays used here. Royalties, however, are paid for plays used on the mainstage and for plays used in the student theatres. But these plays, we are informed by Charles F. Prickett, general manager, are tested plays, the rights to produce which are purchased through various play brokerage agents. Any playwright interested in having an original play tried out in the Laboratory Theatre should write Mr. Prickett for conditions.

□ □ □

Today, Ames Agency, P. O. Box 925, Santa Fe, N. M., Don Ames, publisher, advises that effective immediately material is being accepted from paid subscribers only. "This is necessary," writes Mr. Ames, "as we are slower getting out of the red than we thought we would be. Payments are just the same, one cent a word for feature material and one dollar for poetry and fillers."

New England Quarterly, Hubbard Hall, Brunswick, Maine, edited by Herbert Brown, uses articles and essays, not over 25 double-spaced typewritten pages, on New England Life and Letters, but makes no payment for material.

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MOSTLY PERSONAL

(Continued from Page 3)

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I apologize and congratulate you. Since the war, you
are the first publication I've known to make a change
of address even after as many as six notifications and
requests. Long may you wave!”

You'd like the girls that help with the *A. & J.*
They are happy, good-natured, hard-working, loyal
girls who have done wonders in keeping my morale
up these hard months. They'd do anything for me!
Tonight Veolia brought me in more flowers than I
could get my arms around. She knew that my garden,
to which I can give but little attention, is now be-
tween roses and asters. She knew, too, how much I
enjoy flowers, always keeping a little vase bright with
a red rose, whenever possible (red roses were always
John's I-love-you gift to me) on each side of John's
picture, and finding real happiness in taking the
bright, fresh garden flowers to the beautiful hillside
spot where is that bit of ground that is so com-
pletely ours. ... John always liked to wear a
flower in his buttonhole. It became a little ceremony
for me to pin his “spirit-lifter” on before he left for
Rotary or some other meeting.

Oh, yes, the grandbaby has arrived. Not a girl, but
another fine boy—Robert Clark Bartlett. His Daddy,
John, was down with flu the night the baby an-
nounced his forthcoming appearance. Little Wanda
(a wisp of a girl) got up around four o'clock, took
the car out of the garage, and drove herself to the
hospital. It was Jack (no longer Jackie!) who an-
nounced over the phone, “Gwammie, I've got a
bwand new baby bruvver,” “Little Robert?” I asked.
“No,” quite indignantly, “Bobby!”

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Seattle Junior Programs, Inc., announces its Fifth National Play Competition for plays of high standards for performance before junior audiences. There is no restriction as to subject. Plays must be approximately one hour, forty minutes in playing time, designed for performance before audiences of elementary or junior high school level. . . . The plays must be unproduced and the exclusive property of the owner. Plays which have been produced in try-out with the author working with one particular group shall be considered eligible if the production has been done to test the play and to improve it through production. Adaptations from non-dramatic sources and from foreign plays (provided that originality transcends mere translations) may be submitted, but they must be accompanied by a statement of indebtedness and (if based upon any currently copyrighted work) by a proper authorization from the owner to dramatize and to grant production rights. . . . All plays and title to them will remain the property of the authors, but Seattle Junior Programs, Inc., reserves the right to produce any or all prize winning plays on a royalty free basis until May 31, 1950. For additional information write Miss Muriel Mawer, Executive Secretary, Seattle Junior Programs, Inc., 1386 Dexter Horton Bldg., Seattle 4, Wash.

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WRITING FOR THE COMMUNITY THEATRE

(Continued from Page 10)

frequently do originals. Many of the Little Theatres look for new scripts. If the writer has an urge to write a serious play he should contact his nearest Little Theatre. You can write a play for Broadway through the Little Theatre and have a better chance to sell it if a production or two is behind it.

If the complexity of the market is not enough the writer of the community play must wear a strait jacket of limitations. There must be one scene, more girls than boys in the cast, no smoking, nothing suggestive, and so on. The best way to learn these limitations is to write Barrett H. Clark at the Dramatist Play Service. He has a mimeographed sheet outlining the taboos of the community theatre.

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First Draft, Route 6, Box 549H, Springfield, Mo., has been postponed and will be out in August as a quarterly instead of a monthly. It will be mimeographed and carry short stories, poetry, essays, and letters. Lengths are limited to 4000 words on short stories, 30 lines on rhymed and free verse, and 2000 words on essays. No payment will be made for material other than in copies and subscriptions.

Modern Dogs, Worcester 1, Mass., pays on acceptance by arrangement for articles on the care and management of pure-bred dogs, news of dog shows and field trials, 3000 to 5000 words, with pictures to illustrate if possible. Short fact items and fillers of the same type are also used, as well as pictures of prominent dog fanciers and their dogs. *No dog fiction is bought*. Supplementary rights are released. Leonard J. Schweitzer is editor.

The Henry Publishing Co., 444 Madison Ave., New York 22, is bringing out the Airway Traveler Group of publications to be distributed to passengers on American Airlines (*Flagship Traveler*), United Air Lines (*Mainline Traveler*), and Trans World Traveler (*Trans World Traveler*). Purchases are now being made of entertainment material (crossword puzzles, anagrams, etc.), and articles of general interest, about 1000 words. Payment is by arrangement. Alexander Stuart is editorial director, Mrs. E. S. Armstrong, to whom material should be directed, associate editor.

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The Alaska Sportsman is still located at Ketchikan, Alaska, not Sitka, as it appeared in the July issue. A case of Dictaphone scrambling.

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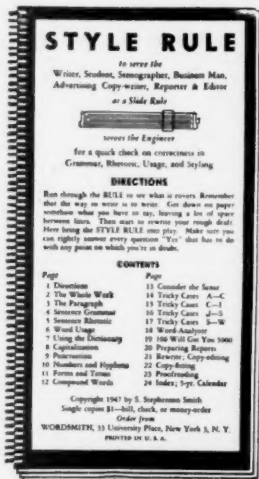
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